



COMMON SENSE in the HOME

EDITED by MARION HARLAND



THE WOMAN WITH A TALENT.

"WON'T you please give a talk on your page to girls who have talent, or think they have? I may as well not be the only one to write to you on the subject, but I do think there are many who would enjoy such a talk, and be helped by it. How can we tell if we have real talent? I have always liked to write compositions and letters, and so many of my friends and relatives think I will be a writer, but I am not so optimistic."

"Many people think they have a talent for something and waste time and money trying to make something out of it, and think the world cold and unappreciative. I asked one of my teachers what she thought of it, and she said it is too early to tell yet if I have a real talent for writing, though I had plenty of originality and write well and easily. Now if my talent is not great or I have mistaken it I want to find it out as soon as possible and bend my energies to something that I can really do. If I really have it I am willing to work hard and wait."

"Even if I never do write a great piece of work, I want to be able to write good stories, not trash, and crude things that so many of our magazines, even some of the highest priced ones, are slopping over with. I read that a certain editor said he gets floods of manuscripts, but only about one in a thousand is worth anything."

"I am 19 years old. Wishing you a continuation of success I am one of your loyal readers. R. F. G."

This is an interesting letter and one of the best of many I have received along much the same line. Only R. F. G. seems to have a root of patience and persistence in her that is not displayed by all young girls, who are eager to rush into print before they have fitted themselves for their work. For be it understood the possession of talent does not render you immune so far as vigorous effort and almost heart-breaking toil are concerned. The highest talent, or genius itself, does not do away with the necessity for toils or for learning to use them. On the other hand, in many cases skill almost takes the place of a heaven-sent gift, and hard work and perseverance have won out when talent, unfortified by either, would have been but a sorry dependence.

Let me give a case in illustration of this—and it is a true story. A girl who had received all the advantages of a liberal education, but who had never shown any desire to write, married a poor man and found that an increase of income would be desirable. She was a good housekeeper, and one day on an impulse she wrote the history of a domestic experience and sent it to a magazine. To her joy and a good deal to her astonishment it was accepted and a minute check bestowed in return. Thus encouraged, she wrote more, and little by little worked herself into the position of a regular writer on home topics.

Later on family circumstances threw upon her the entire support of the household and for years she earned enough to keep the home, to educate her children, to give them advantages of society and of travel. She never deceived herself into thinking that she had real talent or a particle of the celestial spark of inspiration. But she had been trained in her school days to write well, she had read widely and thoughtfully, she had educated her powers of observation and of expression, and when the need came to her she was far better prepared to meet it than if she had been an uncultured genius. Always she tried to make her style the best possible, even when she was writing of nothing loftier than the cleaning of pots and pans, and as a result she never lacked for work. "The best of it, kind, but a poor kind," she used to say of her own efforts, but poor or high, they enabled her to give her children the benefits they would otherwise have lacked.

This is a good example of what hard work, backed by efficient training, will do, even when one has no talent, and I could give a number of other anecdotes to prove the point. If one possesses talent and re-



light, and it is also unquestionable that, as my correspondent says, many of the highest priced magazines print trash and crude stuff. Yet I believe that with few exceptions the writings which are really worth while win out in the long run, and after a while their excellence is recognized, just as the "sloppy stuff" goes its way by and by into oblivion with those who produced it.

Then the query comes, Why do you wish to write? Is it merely to make money—a worthy object, I grant, but not the best—or to get the little reputation you may win by having your material accepted and put into print, or is it because you feel you really have a message to give, something to say that you think will be of help and ought to be heard? If the last is the case you will find comfort and happiness in writing and putting into words the thoughts which fill your mind and heart, even if you don't win a big success in name or money.

The last is the way my correspondent seems to consider the position. Her desire, to judge from her letter, is to write well, even if she never achieves "a big piece of work." In those conditions I think she is wise to go on and practice, striving to make the best she can of herself and to develop all she has in her, with no thought beyond this, so far as she can help it.

It is wonderful and beautiful to have such a gift as is held by some of our great writers, whose utterances have uplifted and strengthened humanity. I do not marvel at the yearnings of any young creature to attain to this. But there are other things left, even if one discovers, after much striving, that what one had hoped was a talent is nothing but a little facility with the pen which evolves into nothing big.

How many of the Cornerites know that poem of Lowell's which seems to fit into this connection?

"Twas glorious, no doubt, to be
One of the strong winged hierarchy,
To burn with seraphs, or to shine
With cherubs, deathlessly divine;
Yet I, perhaps, poor earthly mold,
Could I forget myself to God,
Could I but find my nature's close
Simply as birds and blossoms do,
And but for one brief moment know
'Tis heaven must come, not we must go,
Should win my place as near the throne
The angel of its zone,
And God would listen mid the throng
For my one breath of perfect song,
That in its simple human way
Said all the best of heaven could say:

Do I seem to bring celestial things too near the earth when I say that to my mind even a talent does not impress me as the greatest thing in the world? So many young girls are looking for this and feeling that they cannot fill up the measure of their ambitions unless they become wonderful or unusual! Yet when we come down to it, what is there better or finer in the whole world than to make the best

of ourselves as we are, and not to grieve against the providence which has not granted us talent or genius?

Only here and there do we find some one thus endowed, and from a long experience I feel myself qualified to remark that such are not always the most agreeable to live with. In point of fact, sometimes they are hard to endure, and while their talents may win them reputation outside of the home it does not bring peace to those with whom they are thrown into closest contact.

Let this reflection bring consolation to those who discover after many trials that they are not fitted to shine in letters or art or to practice anything else which will bring them public attention.

"I shall never forget what a man said to me once when I had been married only a little while," a woman told me. "I had known him well and he had helped me in many things of the mind and the spirit which had sunk into insignificance in my school when I married and became absorbed in the cares of my home and work. One day I met him again and we talked a little while about trifles, but when he was going he said, as he told me good-by: 'Remember that it is always possible to live the noble life.' I took that thought back with me to my home occupations, and I cannot tell you how it helped and beautified the round of duties."

The noble life is as well led in the midst of household cares as when writing the great story or the stirring poem. I am not sure but what it is of more practical use in those circumstances than when shut away in the study. You don't need to have a talent to make the best and the most beneficial of the people and things about you, to bring them up to the level you would like to have occupied by the people about whom you long to write, to hold yourself upon the plane where your imaginary personages live and move and have their being. Try this for a while if you are disappointed and come to the conclusion that after all the talent is nothing of what you had hoped it to be.

At the same time, I do not wish to discourage any one who desires to develop such gifts as she may possess, and whether these turn out to be a rich vein of ore or a mere "pocket" the course to pursue is the same. Make the best of yourself. Work at all the details which will be necessary to you when your talent is exploited, if it ever is. They will be useful to you in other capacities. A knowledge of literature, a familiarity with the best expressions of thought, an ease in putting your own reflections into the right words, a perseverance which enables you to master the management of a typewriter as you do of rules of grammar and spelling will all help you, whether you evolve into the great short story writer, the coming American novelist, or become the sister at home housekeeper, wife, and mother.

FAMILY MEALS FOR A WEEK.

SUNDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Oranges.
Cereal.
Cold fish.
Corn flakes.
Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Veal loaf.

Sliced tomatoes with French dressing.

Toasted corn bread (left over).

Apple shortcake.

Tea.

DINNER.

Vermicelli soup.

Roast duck.

Apple sauce.

Scalloped sweet potatoes.

Green peas.

Chocolate ice cream.

Coffee.

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MONDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Oranges.

Cereal.

Bacon.

Boiled eggs.

Rice.

Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Minced veal.

Potato salad.

Toasted English muffins.

Jam.

Tea.

DINNER.

Tomato bisque.

Salmon of duck and peas (two leftovers).

Baked macaroni.

Fruit dessert.

Coffee.

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TUESDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Pears.

Cereal.

Poached eggs on toast.

Blancet.

Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Fried omelette.

Toasted potatoes.

Warm over blancet.

Crackers.

Cheese.

Tea.

DINNER.

Raw oysters.

Beef and kidney stew.

Mashed potatoes.

Succotash.

Cottage pudding.

Coffee.

WEDNESDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Oranges.
Cereal.
Parsley soufflé.
Rice.
Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Warm beef and kidney soup.

Scalloped potatoes.

Toasted cottage pudding.

Tea.

DINNER.

Succotash soup.

Boiled beef's tongue with pig's nose.

Creamed carrots.

Boiled rice.

Custard.

Cake.

Coffee.

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THURSDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Oranges.

Cereal.

Sausage.

Flannel cakes.

Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Cheese fondue.

Baked sweet potatoes.

Rice muffins.

Marmalade.

Tea.

DINNER.

Cream of carrot soup.

Sliced tongue warmed in sauce.

Mashed turnips.

Fried eggplant.

Brown beefy apples.

Coffee.

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FRIDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Oranges.

Cereal.

Creamed eggs.

Popovers.

Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Spanish eggs.

Scalloped omelette (left over).

Graham crumb.

Crackers.

Cream cheese.

Jam.

Cocoa.

DINNER.

Turnip soup (left over).

Baked halibut.

Whipped potatoes.

Boiled onions.

Peach pie.

Coffee.

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SATURDAY.

BREAKFAST.

Baked apples.

Cereal.

Bacon and fried peppers.

Rice.

Coffee.

LUNCHEON.

Scalloped fish (left over).

Potato puff (left over).

Whole wheat biscuit.

Honey.

Tea.

DINNER.

Cream of onion soup (left over).

Broiled steak.

French fried potatoes.

Baked apples.

Rice pudding.

Coffee.

in real earnest and do something worth

it.

G. S."

It is a gratification to get such an appreciative letter as this and to find the letter so eager to be of assistance to others. The letter he sent to be forwarded to M. G. was directed and posted once. The record of this correspondence is like that of many others who have been helped by the Corner. I am glad to put his acknowledgments of the kindnesses he has received.

Boy Wants Books.

I am a boy 13 years old, and I would like to have the books that C. L. S. has

ordered. W. R."

I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. I am sorry to say that the books requested have already been given away. 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MARION HARLAND'S HELPING HAND.

"SHOULD like to say a word to Mrs. F. W., the woman who is growing deaf, and wishes, at over 50, to earn her own living. First I wish to applaud her determination to support herself and thus keep mind and body from rusting out, as they are so likely to do at her age. Further, I would say to her that her first step should be to learn to read the lips. I know of one deaf woman who earns her living teaching lip reading, and another who, through her knowledge of it, has an excellent position. The number of positions open to a deaf woman who can read the lips will be greater than to one who cannot. M."

This suggestion that the deaf should acquire the art of lip reading has been made before frequently in the Corner, but it cannot be repeated too often. The trials of the deaf are marvellously mitigated by skill in reading the lips, and I only wonder that those who have lost their hearing and lament their consequent isolation do not give more attention to this method of relief.

Help Her Get Well.
"I will be glad to send some interesting magazines to F. M. I have been in Sunshine work for fifteen years, and during a long illness received much cheer and courage from your friends; in fact, my physician said they aided my recovery. M. L. F."

Another one of the many tributes accorded the Cornerites for their kindly efforts. The address of F. M. was sent at once, and there is no question that the interesting magazines will be gratefully received.

Unable to Walk.
"I have been an invalid for some years and am unable to walk. If some one of the kind readers of the Helping Hand has a wheel chair I would be glad to get it. I am financially unable to buy one for myself. S. E."

One of the frequent appeals we have for wheel chairs and which are usually answered satisfactorily. Any one who has been an invalid for fifteen years should surely win the compassion and assistance of those more fortunate in health than herself.

Letter for Mrs. H. C. O.
"I have mislaid the street address and number of Mrs. H. C. O. Will you kindly put it on the letter I inclose and post it for me? Mrs. C. W. V."

With this note came a sealed letter addressed to Mrs. H. C. O., but unfortunately we have not her address. Should she see this and write to me, telling me how to direct this letter, it will be forwarded to her at once. Meanwhile we shall hold it unless Mrs. C. W. V. writes asking for its return.

Blacking for Stoves.
"In response to the request of Mrs. R. L. S. I send the following: A blacking for stoves which we have used for years and found invaluable is made by mixing equal parts of kerosene oil and turpen-

tine with a good stove polish. Make a paste the consistency of thick cream and apply to the stove when it is slightly warm. Polish with flannel cloth, and you will have a bright and shining stove for months. Even on airtight heaters which often become red-hot this polish will not burn off. An application of this polish before putting stoves away for the summer will prevent rusting.

"Mrs. L. J. S."
Mrs. R. L. S. will undoubtedly be glad to get this recipe and it will probably be welcome to others besides.

Need Clothes for School.
"Three of my boys need to be in school badly, but we are not able to clothe them properly and meet the payments on the farm at the same time. We would be so glad to get clothing for our boys. They are from 10 to 16 years of age. I will gladly make what return I can for such garments by knitting or crocheting work as I can do almost any kind, or I will exchange large size satin and silk pieces in pound bundles for clothing. One pound of the pieces will make a quilt. I would also like to get infants' long or short clothes, and if any of the Cornerites care to send them to me I will send new transfer embroidery paper patterns. I do hope there will be some one who will care to help us out, for we need the things very much. Mrs. N. S."

As I have said before, it is against my practice to ask for clothing through the Helping Hand except in rare instances. But when boys need schooling and the parents are eager for them to take it and are unable to provide the children with proper clothing it strikes me as being a case where an exception should be made. At this time of year, when the last year's garments are looked over, there are almost always certain articles which are outgrown and these could perhaps be utilized by the mother of three boys whose ages range from 10 to 16. It is easy to see

that anything which could be used would be welcome, either as a free gift or in exchange for the work or the pieces or the patterns offered by the mother. I shall have to have a prompt and generous response to this appeal.

Silver Dollar of 1799.
"In answer to N. A. S., who asks the value of a 1799 silver dollar, I will give the following information: Silver dollars of 1799 with the fillet head, having five stars to right of bust, are valued from \$1.75 to \$2.50 apiece, fillet head with six stars to right of bust are valued at from \$1.35 to \$1.75 apiece. I am a numismatist and will cheerfully answer any questions of this sort. Mint marks play an important part with the most valuable coins and highly valued coins are rare. 'Fillet head' means the head of Liberty when tied with a band."

"Mrs. E. H. M."

I have put the address of Mrs. E. H. M. on file for the benefit of those who may wish it in order to secure information relative to coins they possess. The same answer as to the value of the silver dollars has come to me from several other quarters, and I thank the senders. One of them writes that she is a girl of 18, who wishes to be of service in the Corner and she offers the name of certain dealers with whom those desiring to dispose of their coins may communicate. I cannot give these addresses on this page, but the kindness of the writer is none the less appreciated.

Embroidery and Children's Patterns.
"May I join your interesting Corner? I am a stranger in the city and would like to become acquainted with some Cornerites, especially invalids, as I am much interested in your work of love and wish it every blessing. I am sorry for the baby of which Mrs. V. F. speaks, and the mother has my sympathy and prayers for the child. If she will write to me I think I may be able to tell her of a remedy

which might prove of assistance to the baby's eyes. I also have patterns for making children's house slippers and for foot-hosiery as well as some nice embroidery patterns, if any one cares to have them.

Magazines of Travel.
"I will gladly pay postage on any travel magazines, no matter how far back the date. I am shut in partly and wish to save the magazines and have them bound. N. M."

Can come of our readers respond to this appeal?

No Longer an Invalid.
"Last spring I wrote to the Corner asking for decorations for a lonely cabin, and received all I could use and offers of a great many more, besides cheerful and encouraging letters from a good many others. Since that time I have improved greatly in health and am no longer an invalid, though I am not yet quite able to work. At present I am on a camping tour, and get all the fresh air possible to get anywhere. It will afford me great pleasure to write M. G. any experience I have had during nearly two years of chasing the cure, and when I get well and strong again I want to become a Corner-

ite in real earnest and do something worth while. G. S."

Boy Wants Books.
"I am a boy 13 years old, and I would like to have the books that C. L. S. has offered. W. R."